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SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fourth year

Letter dated 30 March 1999 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to attach the text of a statement by the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation in connection with the aggression by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 64 and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Sergey V. LAVROV
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

99-09017 (E) 300399 300399

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Annex

Statement dated 27 March 1999 by the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation in connection with the aggression by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

On 24 March 1999, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), having commenced rocket and bomb attacks, unleashed a war against a sovereign State - the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Since the attempt by Yugoslavia to counteract armed aggressive separatism in its own territory was the reason for the bombardment, it is undeniable that the use of force by NATO is an act of aggression that blatantly violates the Charter of the United Nations and generally recognized principles and norms of international law. That day has become a dark day in the history of Europe: through the fault of NATO, the continent is on the verge of the most serious military and political crisis in recent decades. The threat of a large-scale military conflict in the Balkans, into which many States will be drawn, is becoming more real with each passing day.

The military operations against Yugoslavia, which were undertaken by the North Atlantic Alliance without approval by the Security Council, are destroying the entire system of international security based on the authority of the United Nations, discrediting the role of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and clearly demonstrating that the rocket and bomb diplomacy of NATO, inspired by the United States of America, represents a real threat to peace and stability in Europe and throughout the world.

In spite of the hypocritical statements by NATO leaders, it is obvious that the armed assault against Yugoslavia will not avert, but will only worsen the humanitarian catastrophe in south-eastern Europe and cause the deaths of civilians and enormous destruction. This madness must be halted immediately.

The State Duma of the Russian Federation Federal Assembly strongly condemns the aggression by NATO and expresses its solidarity with the peoples of fraternal Yugoslavia. In accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has the right of individual or collective self-defence. Accordingly, it is entitled to defend itself against aggression by all available means.

The armed attack against Yugoslavia was carried out in spite of firm opposition by the Russian Federation and the obligations undertaken by NATO member States and laid down in OSCE instruments and the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between the Russian Federation and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

The State Duma declares that it considers the aggression against a friendly State - the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia - a serious threat to the security of the Russian Federation. There are no guarantees that other States will not be the next target of State terrorism on the part of NATO. There are more than enough pretexts for aggression in the current situation that can be thought up.

The most serious lessons should be learned from the events concerning Yugoslavia. The State Duma is confident that the peoples of the Russian Federation will find the strength to bring about the rebirth of the Russian State, which will be able to rebuff all forms of aggression and diktat and ensure, in close cooperation with other countries, stable peace and reliable security on the basis of the generally recognized principles and forms of international law.

The State Duma firmly demands the immediate halting of the military strikes against Yugoslavia and the acts of violence in Kosovo and Metohija and insists on the resumption without delay of political negotiations in order to find ways to resolve the conflict through exclusively peaceful means on the basis of the principles of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Yugoslavia as well as full observance of international legal norms with regard to the protection of human rights and the rights of national minorities. The State Duma appeals to the Parliaments of the States of the world, including the Parliaments of the member States of NATO, calling upon them to advocate the immediate halting of the bombardment of Yugoslavia, prevent a further increase in the number of victims, and bring about a return to the use of civilized political means for settling the crisis in the Balkans.

In light of the situation resulting from NATO aggression, the State Duma also deems it necessary for all the State government bodies of the Russian Federation to draw up a series of measures aimed at enhancing the defence capability of the Russian Federation, expanding international cooperation with friendly countries and reviewing relations with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

The State Duma supports the decisions taken by the President of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Russian Federation, under which all official relations between the Russian Federation and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization have been suspended until the cessation of the military operations conducted by NATO against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the main military representative of the Russian Federation to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization has been recalled, participation by the Russian Federation in the Partnership for Peace programme and the operation of NATO information centres in the territory of the Russian Federation have been suspended, and the Russian contingent in the stabilization force in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been removed from subordination to the NATO military command.

The State Duma recommends that the President of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Russian Federation should take the following measures:

1. Taking into account the situation resulting from the war unleashed by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization against a sovereign State - the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia - to make the necessary additions to the national security concept of the Russian Federation and speed up the formulation and adoption of the Russian Federation's military doctrine;

2. To put forward, on behalf of the Russian Federation, a broad-based peace initiative aimed at immediately halting the rocket and bomb attacks

against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and resuming the political negotiations to settle the crisis;

3. To consider the question of the advisability of the maintenance in force for the Russian Federation of the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between the Russian Federation and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in view of the blatant violation by NATO of the provisions of that document, and to recall temporarily the permanent representative of the Russian Federation to NATO;

4. To demand the holding of a special session of the General Assembly to consider the question of aggression against a State Member of the United Nations and the blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations by the member States of NATO;

5. To take the position that the unilateral actions by the member States of NATO in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and in circumvention of the Security Council constitute a rejection of Security Council resolutions, including resolution 1160 (1998) and 1199 (1998), which provide, inter alia, for the introduction of sanctions against Yugoslavia;

6. To raise the question of the conducting by the International Criminal Tribunal on the Former Yugoslavia of an investigation into crimes linked to the NATO aggression against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia;

7. To consider the question of providing the necessary assistance to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter;

8. To propose the urgent holding of consultations with the heads of State who did not support NATO aggression against Yugoslavia in order to coordinate political and diplomatic measures aimed at halting the war in the Balkans;

9. To address a message to the non-aligned movement and regional international organizations in connection with the start of the war in the Balkans;

10. To take measures to increase the combat readiness of the armed forces of the Russian Federation and draw up clear plans for mobilization and operations;

11. To take measures to provide humanitarian assistance to the peoples of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, render assistance to the refugees and victims of the war, and respect the desire of citizens of the Russian Federation to give voluntarily humanitarian and other assistance to the peoples of fraternal Yugoslavia;

12. To step up work on bringing about the return of the funds illegally taken out of the Russian Federation and to allocate them to support national industry, first of all, the branches that ensure the defence capability and security of the Russian Federation;

13. To speed up the process of unifying the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus; and take measures to bring about closer integration of the member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States;

14. To step up consultations with interested member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States on enhancing the effectiveness of the system of collective security in light of the events in the Balkans;

15. To withdraw temporarily the draft federal law submitted to the State Duma on the ratification of the Treaty between the Russian Federation and the United States of America on the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (the START-II Treaty);

16. To adjust, taking into account the military operations undertaken by NATO in the Balkans, the position concerning international treaties affecting the defence capability and security of the Russian Federation.